

CONGRATS TO ...

Montana artist **Carol Hartman**, whose oil painting, “Rocky Mountain Lifeorce,” was accepted into the 2013 Florence Biennale, held Nov. 30-Dec. 8 in Florence, Italy. The artist, who grew up in the farming community of Charley Creek, says the painting reflects her interpretation of the beauty of Montana, from its eastern foothills, flatlands and farming communities, to the western mountains, rivers and valleys. The Florence Biennale is one of the few international art

events structured as a self-financed independent platform for contemporary art. This year, 450 artists from more than 50 countries exhibited their work at the Fortezza da Basso. “I had the opportunity to meet and work with artists and gallery directors and art theorists from around the world,” says Hartman. “Exposure to the many ideas, concepts, techniques, and materials was extremely beneficial to my artwork.”

The Montana Department of Commerce’s Trade Show Program helped the artist attend Biennale, where she booked a solo exhibition in April 2016 at Artifact Gallery in New York. She also traveled to Venice for the Venice Biennale, to Rome, Livorno, Pisa, and the western coastal towns of the Cinque Terre, where she developed 23 new sketches that are currently on display at Juliana’s Jammin’ Gallery in Columbus. Hartman exhibits widely in Montana and beyond, and is one of the artists at Gallery 25 in Fresno, CA, whose works will be shown in the Fresno Art Museum Retrospective this fall.

Montana artist **Kevin Red Star**, who celebrated his 50th year as an artist with the exhibit “Art of the Native American: Kevin Red Star and His Friends,” on display Nov. 23-

April 27 at the Owensboro Museum of Fine Art, Owensboro, KY. The exhibit was designed to showcase the contributions of contemporary Native Americans to our country’s cultural history from the last decades of the 20th century to the present. Art for this prestigious exhibit was selected by Red Star and the museum’s curatorial staff, and includes works by more than two dozen artists who were students with Red Star at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe. The 50-year commemoration continues with the release of a biography of Red Star, written by Daniel Gibson with photographs by Kitty Leaken. The coffee-table-style book, featuring paintings dating from 1968 to the present, will be unveiled at Art in the Beartooths, July 12 in Red Lodge, where Red Star and been named the 2014 Signature Artist. He is currently working toward an upcoming exhibit in Palm Desert, CA.

Bozeman artists **Susan Blackwood** and **Howard Friedland**, whose works were featured in two East Coast shows this spring. The husband-and-wife painters each had work in “Luce: The Magic of Italian Light,” which featured paintings, photography and sculpture by teachers and alumni of Il Chioistro Italian Workshops, March 28-April 2 at Site 109 Gallery in New York, and “Still Life: Floral and Still Life Show,” March 29-April 27 at Highlands Art Gallery in Lambertville, NJ.

Troy artist **Alan McNiel**, who was awarded first place in painting at the Scottsdale Arts Festival in March. This year McNiel’s paintings have also been included in the La Quinta Arts Festival in Palm Springs and auctions at the Yellowstone Art Museum in Billings, Missoula Art Museum, WaterWorks Art Museum in Miles City, and Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art and the C.M. Russell Museum, both in Great Falls.

Helena artist **Karen Luckey**, whose paintings “Rural Icon” and “Days of Yore” were juried into the 18th annual Heartland Artist Exhibition, March 1-April 5 at the Irene B French Community Center in Merriam, KS. In addition, “Hurry Up Let’s Go” and “Crab Apple Tree” were selected for the Associated Arts of Ocean Shores 2014 Juried Show in Ocean Shores, WA.

Kalispell artist **Carol McSweeney**, whose work was accepted into the American Watercolor Society International Exhibition, April 1-20 at the Salmagundi Club in New York City, and the Arizona Aqueous XXVIII 2014 Show, Feb. 7-March 9 at the Tubac Center for the Arts in Tubac, AZ. She also received the Jordan Ressler Memorial Cash Award at the San Diego Watercolor Society International Exhibition, Oct. 4-30 at the SDWS Gallery in San Diego, and her work was featured in *Southwest Art’s* Juror’s Choice issue, January 2014.



“Rocky Mountain Lifeorce” by Carol Hartman



Kevin Red Star



“Milk River Bank – Glasgow, Montana” by Alan McNiel

The **Big Sky Documentary Film Festival**, held Feb. 15-23 in Missoula, which received a \$10,000 grant from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) in support of the festival’s retrospective artist, filmmaker Robert B. Weide. Widely known for his

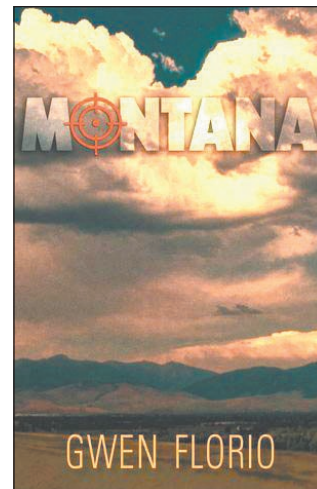
work as principal director and executive producer of HBO’s “Curb Your Enthusiasm,” Weide is an Emmy-winning and Oscar-nominated documentary filmmaker who specializes in the stories of comedy icons. This is the second time the festival has received the prestigious grant. The Academy also accepted the festival as a qualifying event for the Documentary Short Subject Award, meaning films that win the festival’s Short and Mini-Doc categories are now eligible to compete for an Oscar. “This is a tremendous honor,” said Doug Hawes-Davis, executive director of the Big Sky Film Institute.

“We’ve worked hard over the past decade to find powerful and diverse non-fiction films to present to our festival audience, and this decision by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences is a direct result of those efforts. It will certainly help us raise the bar even higher for our Short and Mini-Doc competitions in the coming years.”

Warm Springs Productions in Missoula, which premiered a new reality TV series March 9 on the History Channel. “No Man’s Land” is a spin-off of the company’s popular “Mountain Men” series and features five people as they struggle against extreme desert environments. Chris Richardson, who runs the company with partner Marc Pierce, told the *Missoulian*, “It’s the polar opposite of ‘Mountain Men,’ really. It’s these guys living in extreme temperatures, as opposed to the ‘Mountain Men,’ where they are surviving in the winters.” The new show, in addition to other Warm Springs work, proves that the family friendly company can be successful without relocating to New York City or Los Angeles, he said. “We want to prove – and I think we have – that we can do things differently,” he said. Since the company began in 2008, it has grown into new custom-built offices and employs 85 people between offices in Missoula and Manhattan. “I’m pleasantly surprised, and the sky’s the limit really,” Richardson said, adding that the company has 12 series in production that have appeared on channels such as Animal Planet, A&E and the History Channel.

– From the *Missoulian*, March 8 (missoulia.com)

Missoula author **Gwen Florio**, whose debut novel, *Montana*, won one of two inaugural Pinckley Prizes for Crime Fiction, named for Diana Pinckley, longtime crime fiction columnist for *The New Orleans Times-Picayune*. The prizes were presented March 22 at the 28th annual Tennessee Williams/New Orleans Literary Festival. Florio won the prize for Debut Novel. “Out of a field of excellent debut crime novels, we picked *Montana* because we completely fell in love with the main character,” wrote the judges. “It’s often difficult to pinpoint why someone is lovable. Suffice to say that Gwen Florio’s protagonist Lola fully lives on the page, and what is even more compelling about this brave, irascible character is that she continues to live after the book is closed. She’s fearless, flawed, intelligent, reckless, and funny, but most of all, she is defined by loyalty to her friend and a relentless pursuit of her killer.” The author received a \$2,500 cash award, as well as a paper rosette fashioned from the pages of her book by New Orleans artist Yuka Petz.



Polson author **Carmine “Margo” Mowbray**, whose novel, *An Answering Flame*, was selected for the 2014 Media Award from the American College of Nurse Midwives. This annual award honors a media event, book, film, or an expression of art that presents midwifery in an accurate and positive manner and in doing so helps to promote the profession of midwifery. Her novel, which was inspired by her aunt’s experiences as a nurse midwife in rural Kentucky, is credited with enhancing the “understanding of the struggles of the midwives in the hills of Appalachia.” The award will be presented at the Awards Celebration of the ACNM Annual Meeting in Denver on May 15.

Actor and writer **Leah Joki**, whose new one-woman play, “Prison Boxing,” premieres May 2-3 at the Crystal Theatre in Missoula before its debut May 10 at the Skylight Theatre Company in Los Angeles, and May 14 at the University of California, Los Angeles. Missoula’s **Linda Grinde** directs the production. In addition, the film rights to Joki’s memoir, *Juilliard to Jail*, were recently optioned by “True Blood” and “Magic Mike” star Joe Manganiello and his production company 359inc. Joki is a graduate of The University of Montana and the Juilliard School’s Drama Program. Before she was smitten by prison-theater she worked as an actor in New York and Los Angeles. Under the auspices of Arts in Corrections she taught and/or performed in almost every state prison in California during a career that spanned more than 18 years. Her book and play offer a compassionate glimpse of complex characters that reflect humanity in all its forms: from humorous to utterly horrifying.

The Hi-Line’s yodeling, singing cowboy **Wylie Gustafson** and his band, **The Wild West**, who perform with the Daughters of the Purple Sage, May 17 at the Music Center in Los Angeles. The concert is part of World City’s tribute to “Cowgirl Music, Cowboy Songs and Yodeling, American West.”

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If you include a digital photo, please make sure it’s at least 200 lines per inch (lpi or dpi) or file size of over 500kb (no more than 2mb, please).



Leah Joki

Congrats compiled by Kristi Niemeyer for *State of the Arts*